PEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

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"MEXICAN DUCK" COMES OFF ENDANGERED LIST

What were once known as Mexican ducks in the United States have been removed from the endangered species list because their existence is not threatened.

They are, in fact, now known to be hybrids, crosses between true Mexican ducks and the common mallard, Keith M. Schreiner, Associate Director of the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, announced today.

The decision to remove the so-called Mexican duck from the endangered species list came after a status review of the species by Arizona, Texas, and New Mexico along with the Fish and Wildlife Service. "The review found no threats to the continued existence of either the 50,000 pure Mexican ducks in central Mexico or the 5,000 hybrids occurring in Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and northern Mexico," Schreiner said.

The "Mexican duck" was included on the Service's first endangered species list in 1967 and has been classified that way ever since. Internsive studies of the duck were begun 3 years ago in cooperation with the Mexican government and the States where the duck occurs. Two years ago, researchers discovered that the first "Mexican ducks" collected in the United States in 1893 and preserved at the Smithsonian Institution were actually genetic hybrids, although they looked like pure Mexican ducks.

Hybrids are not included under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. However, the Act does allow the listing of specific geographic populations of a species. But even the hybrid population in the Southwestern United States was found to be healthy and expanding its range into agricultural areas.

The Mexican-like ducks in the United States, as all other migratory waterfowl, remain under the protection of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Populations and environmental changes will continue to be monitored both in the United States and Mexico under the Service's migratory bird program.